

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 14-21 and 23 are pending in this application. Claims 14, 15, 19, 21 and 23 are amended and Claim 1-8, 10-13 and 22 are canceled by the present amendment. No new matter is added.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-5, 7-13, and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,678,598 to Hillebrand et al. (herein “Hillebrand”); Claims 6 and 19-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Hillebrand in view of U.S. Patent 6,572,139 to Adachi; and Claims 14-18 and 23 are allowed.

Initially, Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication of allowance of Claims 14-18 and 23. In addition, Applicants respectfully submit that independent Claims 14, 15 and 23 remain allowable irrespective of the amendments to these claims in the present response.

With respect to the rejection of Claims 1-5, 7, 8, 10-13 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as anticipated by Hillebrand, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 1-8, 10-13 and 22 have been cancelled in the present response. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection to these claims is moot.

Addressing now the rejection of Claims 19-21 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Hillebrand and Adachi, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

Amended Claim 19 recites

a light emitting unit that emits a light in a light emitting direction, the light having a plurality of pattern lights which are in the form of a line, the pattern lights being parallel to each other and emitting such parallel pattern lines;

Hillebrand describes a device for seat supervision in motor vehicles. In particular, Hillebrand indicates that a light source 54 emits a light, and a recording zone is divided into

three sections according to the distance from an airbag (i.e., an airbag deactivation section 82, a section 84 for power adjusted airbag firing, and an airbag activation section 86, in Hillebrand Figure 4). Further, Hillebrand indicates that the airbag is controlled by judging the section to which the light belongs.¹

The outstanding Action states on page 4 that “[i]n regards to claim...19-21, Hillebrand et al. in view of the applicant’s disclosure teaches all of the claimed elements excluding a discreetly distributed pattern. Adachi teaches of a discretely distributed pattern (Reference is made to Figure 12).” Applicants traverse this assertion.

Specifically, Applicants respectfully submit that neither Hillebrand nor Adachi describes or suggests a light emitting unit that emits a light in a light emitting direction, the light having a plurality of pattern lights which are in the form of a line, the pattern lights being parallel to each other and emitting such parallel pattern lines.

In other words, Claim 19 involves detection of the distance to the object by irradiating a plurality of lights, the lights being parallel to each other and emitting parallel pattern lines. This feature is not described or suggested by the combination of Hillebrand and Adachi, which makes no mention of lights which are parallel to each other and which emit parallel pattern lines.

Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 19, and Claims 20 and 21 depending therefrom, patentably distinguish over Hillebrand and Adachi considered individually or in combination. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested the rejection of Claims 19-21 be withdrawn.

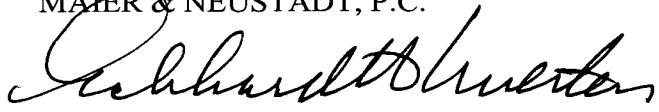
Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that independent Claims 14-15, 19 and 23, and claims depending therefrom, are allowable.

¹ Hillebrand at column 8, lines 5-22.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, this application is believed to be in condition for allowance and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Eckhard H. Kuesters
Eckhard H. Kuesters
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 28,870

Customer Number
22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 06/04)

I:\ATTY\JL\251577US\251577US_AM(8.6.2007).DOC